

ALBION is a journal of board wargaming and allied interests. It is published on the first of each month at a subscription price of 2/- per issue, plus postage costs. Postal Diplomacy games are reported in COURIER, which is the section of ALBION, mailed separately in most cases, created for that purpose. Applications for places in Diplomacy games should be made in writing to the editor - Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire, England. The supply of games is a function of the demand. Although this is not obligatory, players awaiting a game are expected to subscribe to ALBION before their game starts. Players involved in a game get ALBION and COURIER free, having paid the game fee when the game started, until such time as either they are eliminated or win.

ALBION is a member of the NFFF Games Bureau Diplomacy Division. Diplomacy is a game manufactured and marketed by Games Research Inc., 48 Wareham Street, Boston, Mass. 02118, U.S.A. It can be obtained in this country from Hewitts Ltd., King Street, Knutsford, Cheshire. Cost about 48/-.

Contributions to ALBION are welcome. They should be written legibly, preferably typed, and submitted as far in advance of the next publication date as possible. The editor does not necessarily share the views of contributors as expressed in articles or letters.

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The front cover is by R. Emerson. The cartoon at the rear is by George Forster. To both these people, and to our contributors, our thanks.	

Two years ago Colin Newcombe and I, both on the staff of Wilmslow Grammar School for Boys, ran a Diplomacy game with a group of fifth-formers. AHIKS members will perhaps have read the articles I wrote on the game for the Kommandeur. Colin also wrote an article on the game and submitted it to the Historical Association; they printed his article in Volume I Number 4 of 'Teaching History', a large bulletin carrying articles on all aspects of history teaching in schools. This issue was published earlier this month, and I was pleased to get Colin's permission to reprint sections from the article in ALBION. I have omitted only explanatory details of the game of Diplomacy itself which were included in the original article, since the readership was unlikely to have come across the game. A short ..... indicates such an omission.

### WARGAMES IN THE CLASSROOM.

Colin Newcombe.

The first obstacle is antipathy to the word 'Wargames'. This was my own reaction, until I tried one with a group of Fifth formers. Clear your minds of the idea of past sacrifices being presented to pupils as nothing more than the throw of a dice and the movement of counters, where instant generals can sweep the board. I use the word 'wargame' below simply as a convenient term; with the boys, I prefer the word 'project'.

There is a variety of marketed wargames whose rules can be pitched to any age or ability range. .... The project so far completed is a strategic wargame based on the map of Europe in 1914, and is a free adaptation of the rules of 'Diplomacy'.

The organisation involves teams to represent the following powers ..... Each team is composed of a Head of State and an Ambassador. This information is open to all participants, but teams may make other closed appointments, such as spies or security officers. Each team has its own exclusive political area somewhere in the school, which Ambassadors can visit and where Heads of State can plan their moves. Security officers keep undesireables from overhearing such discussions. The difficulty is in finding such places in a crowded school, but we managed adequately with the stage, a changing room, a corner of the hall marked off by chairs, etc. Each side begins with units (armies or fleets) operating from home bases. These allocations are not necessarily accurate as in 1914, but reflect the position where possible ..... The object is to capture more bases so that more units can be deployed. If a team should lose one of its bases, it also loses one of its units. .... All teams submit written orders by an agreed deadline to a member of staff acting as monitor.

We decided on a deadline of one o'clock each day, after half an hour's official diplomatic session. There was of course much informal diplomacy conducted outside this official period. The monitor worked out the moves on a master board, using coloured pins for each country, and the successes and failures were then explained to the teams. The master board was placed in a locked glass cabinet in the school entrance hall, so that all teams had access to the current situation in planning their next move.

The monitor could control the game to a greater or lesser extent by issuing 'policy statements', which could be divulged or kept secret as the teams thought fit. The aim of 'policy statements' is to try to steer the game, as gently as possible, along historically accurate lines, e.g. to recreate the alliance system as it evolved 1914-15, or to create fronts which are geographically accurate. The information they contain is not in itself historical, but

they do represent as nearly as possible the actual policy followed by a particular country, e.g. Russian collapse 1917, and U.S. entry in the same year. It was found best to keep these to a minimum, and to keep the instructions as general as possible, thereby allowing the greatest flexibility in decision making to the boys themselves. Undue interference by the monitor soon brought strong protest. However, in this way, each team was obliged to follow the alliance system existing in 1914. Italy, at first uncommitted, was approached by both sides, but proved so untrustworthy that not even pressure from the monitor could produce the alliance with Great Britain and France. To help assess the value of the project, a short questionnaire was issued at the end. From the following summary of the boys' replies it emerges that some sound historical points were appreciated through their direct involvement in the situations. For example:

1. Which ally did you find the most useful, and why?

With the Central Powers, the situation was ruined by the early elimination of Germany, leaving Austria-Hungary and Turkey to plan a defensive front. (The team representing Germany did not pay as much attention as they should have done to their alliance with Austria-Hungary, and were easily crushed in a joint attack by France and Russia). Turkey particularly appreciated Austria-Hungary's role as a buffer against France and Great Britain. On the other side, France discounted the value of the Russian alliance, since Germany could hold off Russia with only one army, and thus France had to bear the brunt of the German attack. France realized that she could only counter-attack effectively if she did not have to worry about the Channel and the Atlantic. British friendship was imperative. Great Britain also made the same point: '..... as both countries are geographically so close to each other, we have to feel safe from each other before we turn eastwards.'

2. Why do you think you lost, and would another strategy have been more successful?

Austria-Hungary and Turkey considered that they lost as a result of Germany's early defeat. Turkey's alternative strategy for success was to join an alliance with Great Britain and Russia, '... thus the most unassailable powers would have been able to circle round the others.' Italy did not think that an alliance with Austria-Hungary was necessarily the worst policy, despite ending up on the losing side. She considered that, instead of waiting, she should have declared war immediately against France, and invaded Savoy before the French had stabilised the German attack in the north. Thus both Turkey and Italy offered variations which could lead to follow-up studies into why they did not in fact occur. In the western camp, Great Britain made the obvious point about the Russian contribution to victory in that it 'stopped Turkey moving northward and acted as a second front to Germany and Austria-Hungary.' France offered an independent corroboration of Italy's alternative strategy by stating that 'if Italy had decided sooner whose side to go on (i.e. to join Austria-Hungary), it could have changed the result.'

3. Which ally did you distrust the most?

All expressed their wholehearted distrust of Italy. France and Great Britain, believing that they were about to be tricked, attacked her first, thus driving her to ally with Austria-Hungary. An interesting inter-allied suspicion

came to light between U.S.A. on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other. Because America's home bases were invulnerable, she often adopted an intrasigent attitude on the strategy to be adopted in Europe. This led France and Great Britain to be wary of their Atlantic seaboard lest U.S. friendship should be lost.

4. Have you gained any insights into the actual conduct of the diplomacy and strategy of the First World War?

In the replies to this emerged a personality difference between realists and imaginatives. The former thought that it was too far removed from reality to yield any valid lessons, only admitting a certain entertainment value. The latter were more prepared to overlook the discrepancies between what actually happened and the moves as they unfolded in the project to look for more general issues. Turkey claimed to have learned '.... the value of secrecy, negotiating for the best possible terms, and that the line between success and failure of an alliance is very thin.' These basic lessons of diplomacy were echoed by other boys, and by Great Britain most forcibly: 'One has to trust one's allies, and trusting them is easier said than done.' As far as strategy was concerned, they learned to appreciate the advantages (Great Britain and Turkey) or disadvantages (Italy) intrinsic in the geographical position of the country they represented. There was also the beginning of understanding how a stalemate could occur from military factors which had nothing to do with the competence of the commanders, but arose naturally out of the military balance. To quote Great Britain, 'One can see how this stalemate arose, and no one could raise enough forces to smash the barrier.' Turkey also stated that 'it shows how the stalemate on the western front was inevitable.' The stalemate in the project did not coincide geographically with the western front, but it certainly reproduced the frustration on both sides as move after move failed to yield a breakthrough.

We could not claim that any of these points are more than generalisations which could be gleaned from standard textbooks. In this respect, it probably did not serve a very valuable purpose for the fifth form O-level group who took part, especially as it was extremely time-consuming, but with non-examination groups it might certainly serve as a primer to a more academic treatment of the war. The less able might also be taught in this way the geographic basis of the war, for after a week of this project the boys were speaking of East Prussia, Trieste and Sevastopol, not only knowing exactly where they were but also appreciating their strategic importance. The more elastic one's approach, the more is to be gained in terms of class discussion or individual research, as the ideas of Turkey and Italy above have demonstrated. Whatever conclusions the pupils do come to, they have put them into words as a result of their own experiences, and this is perhaps as close as we can come to a 'do and learn' technique in the study of any war. Finally, as a stimulant to further reading, the U.S.A. claimed that the project promoted a general historical interest, and a curiosity to 'learn more about the First World War ... and what really happened to the country you commanded.'

Colin Newcombe.

Reprinted from 'Teaching History', a bulletin of the Historical Association, by kind permission of the author.

Diplomacy Rule Interpretations.

In a letter from Edi Birsan recently, he asked me to rule on certain situations as follows:-

'I must know how you would rule on the following situations. They are from Beshara's house rules as printed in Graustark issue 220, page 8. Do you agree or disagree?

1. France. F(WMS)-MAO. F(Naf)-MAO. F(Por) S F(Naf)-MAO.

Note that MAO remains vacant since the opposing forces are of the same nation, and there is thus a conflict in orders.

2. France. F(Spa-NC)-MAO. F(Naf)-MAO. F(Por) S F(Naf)-MAO.

England. F(ENC)-MAO. F(NAO) S F(ENC)-MAO.

3. France: F(Naf)-MAO.

England: F(ENC) S French F(Naf)-MAO. F(NAO)-MAO.

4. France: F(MAO) S English F(ENC)-IRI.

England: F(ENC)-IRI. F(NAO)-IRI.

Please print a reply to the above. Also please cite each example and either agree with the rulings as presented or disagree. Edi Birsan. '

Gamesmaster's comments.

To my mind, the crux of this problem is the self-standoff. I have already dealt with the latter ruling in an earlier issue of ALBION, aided by the invaluable BROB, but will devote a short section to reminding readers of this rather useful, though perhaps artificial, tactic.

The self-standoff occurs when a nation orders two units to the same, usually critical, space. They stand each other off, of course, but they defend the space in question, and the upshot is that three spaces are defended by two units. Thus if Turkey has armies in Armenia and Constantinople, and Italy has an army in Smyrna, and there are good reasons why Turkey should not allow Italy to penetrate further, the Turkish orders A(Arm)-Ank, A(Con)-Ank defend Con, Ank and Arm, and an attack on any of them by the Russian army would be stood off (unless, of course, it had support).

The rules don't permit units of the same nationality to attack each other, but they make no mention of this situation. Agreed it bears no relation to orders which would actually be given in a real situation, but then quite a lot of the game has this characteristic without suffering.

An interesting ploy to counter the self-standoff is the Reinhardt Gambit, in which Italy (in the above example) would support one Turkish army in its move, another unit moving to the space vacated.

Now, in these circumstances, there seems to be no reason why the French move Naf-MAO, in Edi's example 1 above, should not work. It is supported, and therefore should succeed against an unsupported force from the other side. I can see no reason for a commander to submit such a set of orders (maybe Edi has a crafty tactic in mind, but I can't spot it); however, if such orders were submitted to ALBION, the ruling would be:

France: F(WMS)-MAO. F(Naf)-MAO. F(Por) S F(Naf)-MAO. Example 1.

I agree with the stated ruling in example 2. We must discount the attack by the French unit in Spa-NC, just as we would discount an attack from there by a fleet of any other nation. The situation thus reduces to 2 units v 2 units (or attack with support v another attack with support), and hence a standoff. My ruling would be:-

France: F(Spa-NC)-MAO. F(Naf)-MAO. F(Por) S F(Naf)-MAO. Example 2.  
England: F(ENC)-MAO. F(NAO) S F(ENC)-MAO.

With example 3 we are back to example 1 again. We have a space attacked by a single unit from one side, and by a unit with support from the other. There seems to be no doubt as to which attack fails. I can't imagine why an English commander should want thus to order, but if he did my ruling would be:-

France: F(Naf)-MAO. Example 3.  
England: F(ENC) S French F(Naf)-MAO. F(NAO)-MAO.

I agree with the stated ruling in example 2, since I don't see really how this situation differs from those above. My ruling would be:-

France: F(MAO) S English F( NC)-IRI. Example 4.  
England: F(ENC)-IRI. F(NAO)-IRI.

I would be interested to receive comments from readers on these rulings which, as far as I can gather, are pretty universal in the U.S.A. Just for further clarification, take the following set of orders:-

England: F(Nor) S Russian F(Ska)-NTH.  
Russia: F(NTH) stands. F(Ska)-NTH. F(Hel) S F(Ska)-NTH.

This sort of situation happened in a Diplodaur game. The idea was that a German attack, with support, was coming into the north sea. For some reason (I can't remember the exact details now) the idea was to hold off this attack, but enter the NTH from Ska, and retreat the Russian F(NTH) to a German-held supply centre (Holland, I think).

The gamesmaster rightly ruled that the Russian order F(Hel) S F(Ska)-NTH was illegal, as well as the attack (Ska)-NTH. The support order would still have been illegal had the F(Ska) been English.

An interesting, if academic, argument arises from the following set of orders, which appear, in one form or another, in practically every game played.

England: A(Bel)-Ruh. A(Hol)-Bel. A(Pic) S A(Hol)-Bel.

Now, in the event of the attack on Ruh failing, A(Bel) stays put, and so does A(Hol). However is the support order an illegal order, or does it just fail? It would have been perfectly legal had Bel-Ruh worked - can an order change from legal to illegal according to what happens somewhere else? Interesting point. The rules actually say that a unit may not cause another unit of the same nationality to retreat, or words to that effect. However, although the rule interpretation is clear enough, the philosophy (if one can use the word in this connection, which I doubt) isn't clear at all. It's one thing to have your order declared a failure, but quite another to have it called illegal. Smirches the character, and what-not.  
Don Turnbull

NEW DIPLOMACY GAMES FOR ALBIONITES.

We usually announce in the first page of this rag that the supply of games is a function of the demand. You might recall that the policy nowadays is for me to keep a list of 'players wanting games', then announce a new game when the list reaches 7.

Well, that situation arose during the last month, and COURIER 23A carried an announcement of a new game, which is called ALBION 71/5. The deadline has been set in mid-January to a) allow plenty of time for initial negotiation, and b) to thwart the best efforts of the Post Office to delay letters over the Christmas period. The Postmaster General, on reading this, should gnash his teeth in time with Rule Britannia, at the rendering null and void of his plans.

Anyway, here's the game list.

ALBION 71/5. Boardman number to be allocated.

Austria: Dennis Nixon, 49 Manor Street, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS1 4EY.  
England: Malcolm Watson, 3 Hawthorne Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.  
France: Peter Robertson, 59 Upper Brockley Road, London S.E.4.  
Germany: David Karfoot, 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancashire.  
Italy: Steve Jackson, Students' Union, The University, Keele ST5 5BJ.  
Russia: Peter Roberts, Students' Union, The University, Keele ST5 5BJ.  
Turkey: Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent.

Deadline for the Spring 1901 orders is Friday January 15th 1971.

Looks like this could be another interesting game, with five newcomers to postal Diplomacy, and the arch-enemies Stuart and Watson. We have a bloc from the Keele University Wargames Society and another consisting of Bob Stuart and Peter Robertson, whose wives teach at the same school. Just to make things more difficult, we have two players with identical Christian names and only slightly different surnames, which could give someone the chance of some deliberate confusioning. If John Robertson had been in the game as well, things could have been even more confusing.

Anyway, we hope the players all enjoy the game, in spite of having me as the gamesmaster.....

On to the subject of international games. For some time now I have been toying with the idea of running an international game in which the players all came from different countries. I have mentioned this around, and have got a degree of enthusiasm for the project.

My ideas for countries were 1) anyone from the British Isles, 2) Richard Redd from Israel, 3) Bernie Ackerman from South Africa, 4) anyone from the USA, 5) anyone from Canada. Plus two others, and this is where the idea blew a fuse. Possibly Ian Erskine (Ireland) could be persuaded to join in, but the seventh country could be hard to find, and I have had thoughts of calling Scotland a different country just to fit the requirements. I am in contact with war-gamers in Sweden and Belgium, but as far as I know none of them has Diplomacy. Maybe someone else can put me in contact with a seventh country?



Anyway, the current situation is as follows:-

One U.S. player - Edi Birsan - already signed up.

One Canadian player - Mike Monahan - already signed up (he has 16/3 in credit, having already paid the game fee).

Places available for players from five other countries. Please let me know.

Ray Evans is at the head of the 'players wanting games list' - he has first option for the U.K. spot if he wants it.

In addition, the rest of the 'players wanting games' list is as follows:-

Ray Evans, Jim Boskey (international games), Stephen Cruse, Jeremy Elsmore.

If you want adding to this list, please let me have your name. The game will start as soon as the list reaches 7 in any one category. DON'T pay game fees in advance, please - it only confuses my already totally confused accounts department.

\* \* \* \* \*

Apparently The Wargamers' Newsletter ran a short comment on ALBION recently. I haven't seen the article, but quite a few people wrote to me as a result of reading it, and the result has been a few additions to the subscribers list. So it's probably time I printed an up-to-date version. According to my books, the credit figures are correct inclusive of the cost of this issue, but excluding the postage for this issue.

#### ALBION Trades and Subscribers List.

Symbolism as previous lists - add the symbol P\* for anyone who is signed up for a game, but who isn't subscribing before the game starts.

1. Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex.  
S. (£1-17-9d).
2. Malcolm Watson, 3 Hawthorn Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.  
P. \*0\*
3. Colin Newcombe, 115 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire.  
S. (11/10d).
4. John Robertson, Upper Dungless, Arbroath Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee  
DD5 1QN. P. \*-10/10d\*
5. Chris Hancock, 17 Mallard Road, Chelmsford, Essex.  
P. \*7/6d\*
6. David Wood, 60 Woodgate Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke on Trent ST7 3EF.  
P. \*-1/3d\*
7. Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Boulevard, San Diego, California 92116.  
TA. (-2/7d).
8. John McCallum, P.O.Box 52, Ralston, Alberta, Canada.  
T.
9. Jeff Key, 4611 N. Pennsylvania, Apt. 1-D, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112.  
T.
10. Dick Holcombe, 233 Orange Street, Oakland, California 94610.  
TA. (-£1-7-8d).
11. Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Beds.  
P. \*£1-0-6d\*
12. Bob Johnson, P.O.Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981.  
TA. (-£3-0-10d) - postage for Diplodeur IV/11, and £3 credit for Buddy Tretick accounted in this figure.

13. Don Miller, 12315, Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906.  
T.
14. Bob Thomas, 155 Coxford Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO1 6JX.  
P. \*-6d\*
15. Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent.  
P. \*3/8d\*
16. Eric Slack, 26 Hartcroft Road, Bestwood Park Estate, Nottingham NG5 5JF.  
S. (8/-).
17. Sheila Minion, 7 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby DE3 2PY.  
S. (10/8d).
18. Charles Wells, 3021 Washington Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118.  
S. (19/9d).
19. Terry Kuch, 7554 Spring Lake Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20034.  
T.
20. Larry Fong, 704 Alice Street, Oakland, California 94607.  
S. (-£1-6-7d). Larry will not get this issue, nor any further issue until he clears up the position re his current debit to ALBION.
21. Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, New York 11104.  
P. \*2/9d\*
22. Bill Heim, 27964 Edgecliff Way, Hayward, California 94542.  
S. (£1-13-1d).
23. John Lilley, 112 Croydon Road, Reigate, Surrey.  
S. (£1-9-2d).
24. Buddy Tretick, 3702 Wendy Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906.  
P. \*£1-13-5\*
25. Fred Davis, 5307 Carriage Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21229.  
S. (10/2d).
26. Richard Redd, K'vutzat Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel.  
P. \*£1-8-4d\*
27. Rod Blackshaw, 24 Oak Cottages, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire.  
P. \*3/10d\*
28. Bernie Ackerman, P.O.Box 6, Daggafontein, Transvaal, South Africa.  
P. \*£1-5-0d\*
29. David Jones, 4/58 Deveron Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire.  
P. \*2/10d\*
30. Allan Calhamer, 321 W. Calendar Avenue, Kensington Apartments 2E, La Grange, Illinois 60525.  
A.
31. Jim Dunnigan, Poultron Press, P.O.Box 396, New York City, New York 10009.  
A.
32. Tony Jones, 32 Saxon Close, East Preston, near Worthing, Sussex.  
P. \*£1-0-2d\*
33. Ian Erskine, 46 Carnlough Road, Cabra, Dublin 7, Ireland.  
S. (17/1d).
34. Bob McLaughlin, Hickory Farms, 3 Parole Plaza, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.  
S. (-18/8d).
35. Dennis Nixon, 49 Manor Street, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS1 4EY.  
S. (£1-4-10d).
36. Omar DeWitt, 78 Wickham Drive, Williamsville, New York 14221.  
S. (-10/10d).
37. Harry Tucker, 22 Salisbury Road, Seaford, Sussex.  
S. (10/1d).

38. Henry Radice (Lt. Col., M.B.E.), G Branch, HQ Northern Command, York YO1 4AU. S. (11/7d).
39. Jeremy Elsmore, 3 The Gorse, Tabley Road, Knutsford, Cheshire. S. (10/-).
40. Joe Seligs, 15 Windswept Drive, Trenton, New Jersey 08690. S. (-6/6d).
41. David Ksrfoot, 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancashire. S. (£2-8-8d).
42. Simon Garrett, Bathwick House, Bath BA2 6NX, Somerset. S. (-4/6d).
43. Jim Boskey, 19 Shire Hall Close, London N.W.4. S. (18/-).
44. Steve Jackson, Students' Union, The University, Keele ST5 5BJ, Staffs. S. (10/1d).
45. David Berg, 17 Church Lane, Highfield, Southsmtpon. S. (8/-).
46. Peter Robertson, 59 Upper Brockley Road, London S.E.4. S. (-2/5d).
47. Peter Roberts, Students' Union, The University, Keele ST5 5BJ, Staffs. p\*
48. Stephen Cruse, 119 Gravel Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. S. (-2/-).
49. David Taylor, 132 Dowson Road, Hyde, Cheshire. S. (4d).
50. C.R.Appleby, 115 Wellingborough Road, Rushden, Northants NN10 9TE. S. (2/11d).

So we have reached the half-century! Thanks to everyone for their support and (perhaps misplaced?) confidence. There are a few more names in the pipeline, particularly wanting to sign up for new games, so I hope there will be a further increase in the list before long.

I would like to explain that, although certain people apparently owe me large sums of cash for ALBION, I'm not asking my lawyer to visit me yet. Many of these people have complex financial transsctions with me, and it just happens to be convenient to lump the accounts into ALBION.

However Lsrry Fong seems to have dropped out of sight, and if anyone happens to be in touch with him, perhaps they would mention that he is the sole cause of my wife and children going unclothed and unfed. At least that keeps them at home.....

Also, has anyone heard anything from Jeff Key recently? I had heard that he has had a spell in hospital. Hope you are fully recovered, Jeff, and that we will be seeing further editions of LEBOR GABALA soon.

#### Back Issue List.

Some back issues are out of print, and I am keeping a list of names of those who want photocopies; when the list gets large enough to make photocopying viable, I will put it in hand.

Dennis Nixon wants 3,4,5.  
Jeremy Elsmore wants 1,3,4,5,6,11.

Bernie Ackermasn wants 1,3,4,5.  
Bill Heim wants 1,3,4,5.

ALBION Game Review Number 10B.

TACTICAL GAME 14 (cont.)

Part II.

In the last ALBION we reviewed the earlier scenarios of Tactical Game 14, and the rules appertaining to these actions. Now we move on to the later scenarios and some new rulings.

Publishing details, Background etc. as ALBION 23.

Presentation.

We have nothing to add to our previous comments in this respect, except to say that the high praise we lavished on the mapboard and unit counters has been confirmed by many people at the AHKS British Region Meeting in early November. The game attracted more attention than any other at the meeting.

General comment on the later scenarios.

From about 1450 onwards, new units enter the game scenarios, starting with the artillery - heavy and light - and leading on to the arquebus and, from about 1520 onwards, the improved arquebus.

Trenches are available from 1400 onwards, and the castle, with its series of rules, enters one of the imaginative scenarios.

With the introduction of the new 'gunpowder' weapons, other - less efficient - firing weapons gradually disappear. After Agincourt (1415) we lose the long-bow which, up to that stage, was the most effective weapon available. The crossbows continue to appear in the orders of battle but, in comparison with the arquebus and the artillery, they are relatively less useful.

The introduction of new units brings with it new rulings, just as complex, yet just as fascinating as before. We make no overall change in our comments on the game and the play, nor do we alter our opinion concerning the general clarity of the rules. In all its forms, TAC14 is a most interesting and entertaining game - of all the games we have play-tested, this has been the most enjoyable (although we liked many of the others).

Our further examination of the game has, however, revealed one or two minor points which we missed previously, and the rest of this review will be devoted to discussion of certain aspects of the game. We hope that the designer, Al Nofi, will be able to write a short comment on our findings, to be published in a future issue of ALBION.

The Terrain.

Obviously the type of terrain governs, to a great extent, the type of action fought on it. I gather that, in certain table-top competitions, players are permitted to study the terrain before they decide what proportions of what types of unit to deploy, the total strength of the army they can choose being regulated by a points system.

The TAC14 mapboard is 'full of terrain'. Hilltops, slopes, woods, streams etc. take up 37% of the total playing space. This seems rather high as an 'average' reflection of the type of terrain on which Medieval actions were fought, and means that an attacking force is going to have a difficult time dislodging an enemy from set positions. Unit types and numbers are dictated by the game scenario - you cannot elect to deploy a force of your choice.

Heavy cavalry, who must charge a certain distance in a straight line before making an attack, suffer the worst from terrain restrictions; it is in fact quite possible to set up a defending force such that enemy heavy cavalry can never make a fully effective charge.

Any scenario, therefore, which allows a defender to deploy first is certain to be more or less biased against the attacker, particularly if the attacker has heavy cavalry subject to the feudal rule (see later).

We would have liked to see the game opened out more by using less restrictive terrain. Had the unit counters been smaller we would have tried one or two scenarios on the Deployment mapboard, to see how it operated in less restricted surroundings. As it is, perhaps the Panzerblitz board will give this opportunity.

Players can, of course, adjust the ruling for deployment of a particular scenario to suit their own view; the game rules are more than flexible enough to permit this. One way of getting round the problem would be to rule that all units must start the game off the game board, and come on at particular road squares. This would force a defending side (which presumably would get the benefit of moving first) to accept a less-than-optimum defensive posture, which after all is a fairly accurate reflection of a period of warfare in which one side was usually badly informed about the movements and intentions of the enemy.

#### The Feudal Rule and Caltrops.

From 1176 to 1422, heavy cavalry units operate under the restrictions of the Feudal Rule, which forces them to charge the enemy whenever physically possible, under whatever conditions the enemy has prepared for them. We do not argue with this rule, and in fact applaud its inclusion. However certain major snags occur when one side has Feudal heavy cavalry and the other, deploying first, has caltrops.

The rules for caltrops (cavalry traps) are simple. When cavalry get entangled in them, the cavalry can be eliminated by a single attack from any source. Also they prevent heavy cavalry from completing their charge on enemy units positioned behind a caltrop.

Take the Bannockburn scenario as an example. There are no rules stating which side deploys first, and therefore it seems sensible to let the Scots (who have a predominantly defensive force) have the advantage of initial deployment and choice of terrain, and make the English, who have Feudal heavy cavalry, pit their forces against the prepared Scottish positions.

Now the Scots have some caltrops which, according to the rules, they may include in their initial placement. Bearing our earlier remarks about the terrain in mind, it is quite easy for the Scottish player to so place his units and caltrops that the English heavy cavalry cannot charge at any of the defenders without running into caltrops on the way.

Under the Feudal Rule, however, the English heavy cavalry are forced to charge. The outcome is predictable. The cavalry charge, they get entangled, they are shot down and eliminated by the Scottish archers (crossbowmen, actually). The entire British heavy cavalry force is eliminated in the second turn, and there is nothing the English player can do about it. This causes a loss of 24 points (each heavy cavalry unit is worth 4 points) and brings the English player close to the panic threshold, and to the verge of defeat. All this is enforced by the rules - no variation is permitted.

This whole affair seems rather over-biased, to say the least. Malcolm Watson, of course, said that this was the predictable effect the brave Scots would have on the idiot English. However even he had to admit that the combination of therulings seemed a bit harsh.

We would propose, therefore, that, in such circumstances, one of the two alternatives below should be adopted, to give the attacking side something of a chance.

EITHER the side with the heavy cavalry deploys first (rather an unrealistic alternative, this),  
OR the side with the caltrops must construct them during the course of the game, rather than deploying them in the initial set-up. The rules do allow the construction of caltrops in the middle of action.

We would be interested to receive comments on this situation from readers as well as from Al Nofi.

### Treachery.

We commented briefly on this rule in the last report. However we hadn't seen it in operation much at that stage, and hadn't realised its full potential. Now it seems rather a drastic rule to us.

The Treachery rule can be invoked by either side at any stage of the game except the first turn. A die is rolled for each stack of units, and the roll determines whether that stack stays loyal, leaves the field, or changes sides and starts fighting for the enemy.

Thus an army which is fighting its best and gaining ground can suddenly find its fighting strength halved - the enemy might increase his fighting strength at the same time. Or an army which is losing the battle and fighting with its last reserves might suddenly find these reserves desert the field, so that victory conditions are gained by default.

All this seems rather arbitrary. Malcolm was the first to decide this, when his entire force of heavy artillery suddenly started firing on his own men. There is a chance, under the Treachery rule, of one half that a particular stack of units will not be available to fight in the next turn. There is a chance of one sixth that they will turn against their former friends.

We think these figures are rather high, and would recommend a revision of the treachery table, perhaps using two dice to spread the probabilities, which yields less drastic results. This should bring the rule into better proportion and allow victory to be gained by skill, not by virtue of a single unfortunate die roll. Imagine Stalingrad played by using just one die roll, and at 2-1 odds.

Alternatively, perhaps a better way of tackling the problem would be to allow the use of the existing Treachery table in more restricted circumstances, probably related to the losses in the field. We have in mind some system whereby the rule could only be invoked if the side using the rule had either lost more than a certain proportion of his units (in which case underhand methods like buying off the enemy might seem reasonable, although with little chance of success) or, more realistically perhaps, if the side invoking the rule had already gained a considerable numerical superiority over the enemy (in which case the enemy could be pardoned for adopting the 'if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em' attitude reflected in the rule).

As a general comment, it strikes me that we have a lot to learn in the field of morale rulings, something rather new to board wargames. The table-top enthusiasts are much better equipped to deal with this sort of thing - they have more complex morale rules, granted, but they yield much less of an approximation to the situation than do straightforward rules such as the Treachery Rule.

The rule as it stands at present brings into the game an unwanted element of luck which can change the whole tactical situation at the drop of a hat. Not that there is anything wrong with the motives behind the rule - it's just that the application, and the results, are far too fierce.

#### Summary.

We could go on discussing details of this game for many more pages. The rules are almost completely novel to us - understandably so to people who have little or no experience of table-top play. They are thus fascinating and yet another potential source of discussion. We thought it best that we just mention those points which seemed to us the most critical, and allow further discussion of these and other factors to take place in future issues of ALBION.

We rate this game as the best we have ever tested. Perhaps this decision has been slightly influenced by the very enjoyable play mechanics - we liked 1918 very much, for instance, but the mechanics of play have a slight effect on the enjoyment derived from the game. In fact 1914 is a game whose merit in design has been almost completely buried under a welter of tedious mechanics.

We are sure that this attractive game will become very popular, particularly with those players who can find face-to-face opponents. As we remarked last time, it isn't entirely suitable for postal play, and some of the mechanics will have to be either re-adjusted or approximated to make postal play really worthwhile without taking too long. However even postal play will be very popular, in our opinion, since the enjoyment of the game will more than compensate for any minor inconvenience in playing through the mail.

Congratulations, Al Nofi, on a game which we can rate as Highly Recommended without fear of contradiction.

For postal play, use the grid printed in ALBION 23.

Malcolm Watson. Don Turnbull.

#### On Future Game Reviews.

I'm sorry to have to announce that the play-testing activities of Malcolm and I will soon be severely curtailed, and hence that reports might not appear in future issues of ALBION with the same frequency as previously. The reason is simple - Malcolm is due to be married next Spring, and hence will get more and more involved in things like Looking For A House, Tidying The Garden, Convincing The Bank Manager and other games that we all get up to from time to time. We will try to bring you reviews of new games at the same depth as before. Failing that, I will attempt to write a short article on a new game each month, as a result of solitaire testing. At least, that way, you would get some information on the game which might influence your purchase of it. The aim is to let you know something about new games before you decide to buy them 'sight unseen'. Strange phrase, that - wonder where it came from?

LETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLET

From David Berg, 17 Church Lane, Highfield, Southampton.

If this letter cannot be published complete and un-djt-ed, scrap it.  
I received my first apocalyptic defeat at the hands of ALBION issue 22.  
Now, I have been running a diplomacy magazine for the last 3 months, blissfully unaware that one of same should ever be destined to be longer than one page, - even with the comfortable extra ground it covers. Paper by the duetbin-load... ..that took about an hour to read. Reaction from myself and the diverse persons I have secretly exhibited it to seems to be pretty unvaried. Who the hell, what inadequate type of person, can just read a thing like ALBION regularly, let alone pay 2/- a time for that privilege. We must live in worlds so different - and yet amazingly, we seem to have one interest in common.  
I feel that to get the most out of war-games, one has to take them absolutely dead seriously. But need this gross seriousness be extended to discussions of games, observations, critiques, analyse, ss is the job of ALBION? I mean, the invitation to write humourously for ALBION is couched in distressingly pristine (straight) terms - "Such material should be either games-orientated, or should be satirical in nature." What a horrible way of trying to say it, or so it appears to me anywy. I suppose it all depends on attitudes to 'playing games' - and now for some toe-treading! - some people use games as a way of communicating, of finding out how others are inside their own heads; others as a substitute for their lack of accomplishment in real life. I have noticed this (as a general observation) from chess, bridge and go players' groups, and I strongly suspect that psychology has made plenty of comment upon the self-same subject. Perhaps the difference between approaches to war-gaming may be related to the existence of two distinct groupings of people who play - war freaks (ie lovers of the vestiges and materials of war), and pacifist types. This last may surprise you a little, but assuredly about 2/3 of the players in the two games I am running are distinctly of like conviction.  
So what is the point of my letter? Well, though ALBION will never be for me, and despite that if an ALBION-devotee and myself met we would be almost totally unable to communicate (except about war-games), I would like to see some of the 'heavyness' of the magazine replaced with more variety, and preferably less lengthily. I, for instance, failed to derive any amusement from the editor's 7 side piece "A British Idiot in America", and was really shocked by his statement on the purchase of games to the tune of £800. Our ethic-structures are diametrically opposed. And if Don Turnbull wants to know what America is really like, perhaps I'll write him a report on my experiences there.  
Know, though, that as you read this latter (and you will be able to tell by its lack of continuity if it has been 'expurgated'), your editor must be a tolerant man to print it. And Don - notice I didn't appear to use any 4-letter words of the sort that seem to hang you up. I observe that the Mary Whitehouses and lesser breeds of repressors are the ones with the dirty minds. If you use a word like \*\*\*\* regularly other than in its generic derivation, it soon ceases to be anything but a sound with associated emotive value (not sexual / dirty, just a word.) So I can do little but laugh at the statement in your letter "The 4-letter word doesn't necessarily fit with our ideas of a magazine that has circulation in other countries." So now we try to kid those in other countries that such words do not exist in the English language eh?



\*From David Berg, continued\*

I hope none takes this letter as an attack, it is not meant maliciously, but as an opinion from someone much different from people who read ALBION, and also perhaps advice on how to make ALBION a better thing. Anywar, much love to all who would conquer (on a board),  
Dave Berg.

\*Readers should be assured that I have printed the above letter exactly as I received it, without a single alteration of any type. Comments on David's views are welcome. djt\*

From Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire.

Dear Don,

I found your article in the latest Kommandeur quite interesting and I agree for the most part.

Chess is the most popular wargame about. Why? Easy - the rules and set-up time are so easy and short to learn that the game is enhanced as a result. 1914 on the other hand is so hard to learn, not to mention the time needed to set it up, that the game becomes cumbersome, or top-heavy, as it were.

I really don't think that it's any surprise that games like AK, D-Day, Midway etc. are more popular than the so-called 'complex' ones. After all, for a hobby which for the most part (as far as I can see) is played through the medium of correspondence, it's only logical for people to choose games that are more convenient for that purpose.

Another point - just because a game may appear simple by just looking at the rules and set-up, doesn't mean that it is. Chess is an obvious example of what I mean. Diplomacy is another example, though having noted all the rule interpretations our American friends have come up with, which would never have occurred to me, I'm a little bit doubtful about it now being ambiguous as the rule book states.

When someone buys a wargame (or indeed any game if it comes to that) he buys it to enjoy the game. I get the impression from games like 1914 that the designer thinks the buyer would enjoy the game more if he has to fight through volumes of rules, and when he's done that spend a couple of hours messing about setting up the thing. Rules etc. are only secondary to the actual game itself.

When they predominate or interfere with the game, then not only does it spoil the game, but spoils that players' enjoyment too.

Who's for a game of Snakes and Ladders?

Regards, Ray.

\*I think most people, except perhaps a few die-hard 1914 fanatics, would agree with Ray in outline. However there are loopholes - why, for instance, are U-boat, Tactics II and Kriegspiel so unpopular, yet simple, whereas Anzio, which is almost as complex as 1914, is gaining popularity rapidly? Some further aspects certainly enter the question, of which one is certain to be play mechanics. My main objection to 1914, for instance, is the rule concerning the 'facing' of units - it makes a very messy game, as anyone who has tried to look under a stack of units, all facing different ways, have found out. Anzio has much better mechanics. Even then, there is much more to it than this - other qualities, which I can't start to pin down, must influence the matter. Monopoly is an example of a game which was a huge success partially due to the prevailing social conditions at the time! Ask a designer how he is going to build that in! djt\*

From Peter Robertson, 59 Upper Brockley Road, London S.E.4.

Dear Don,

I have thanked Bob Stuart for missing off my address \*see ALBION 23 Page 10\* and conclude it was because of his swift defeat at the hands of myself and his wife, who doesn't normally play Diplomacy "because any game where ships go on land must be for idiots". Well, I am a Diplomacy fanatic of some years' standing and would be honoured to be admitted to your portals as a member of everything. I am very interested in the Avalon Hill games and would like to purchase anybody's unwanted second-hand Stalingrad, or possibly others.

Please inform me of how much bullion I should send, and please supply me with ALBIONS and COURIERS, as Bob cut off my supply, and I've nearly finished the November issue - I've eaten all but the last page.

Is it true that Bob Stuart writes all of ALBION under pseudonyms?

Sincerely,

Peter Robertson.

\*Readers will have noticed, on page 7, that Peter is already in a game, with Bob Stuart also taking part. If anyone has second-hand AH games for sale, please get in touch with Peter. djt\*

From Eric Slack, 26 Hartcroft Road, Bestwood Park Estate, Nottingham NG5 5JF.

Dear Don,

The other day a thought stole into my mind and, finding itself in unoccupied territory, promptly stole out again. But not so promptly that I didn't catch sight of it. And so, confronted with this sort of phenomenon, I thought someone should hear about it. You, I fear, drew the short straw.

Right then. Harking back to the regional meeting, you may recall I was doing a fair bit of interested onlooking at the demonstration of the gentle art of warfare as practised in the Middle Ages in TAC14, between yourself and the redoubtable Celt Malcolm. During the course of all this I seem to recall some comment to the effect that the terrain could exercise a marked effect on the play of some of the scenarios, sometimes rendering the effectiveness of some of one's more powerful (theoretically) forces null and void, thus producing in the adversely affected player much gnashing of teeth and a tendency to froth at the mouth.

Hence this thought of mine. What price, it said, terrain which varied from one set-up to another? All one would need would be a pair of scissors, a couple of felt-tipped pens, and maybe some transparent photo-corners, or something similar. These would allow one to create the most effective terrain for the particular circumstances. Thus, one could insert a shrewd wood here, or obliterate an inconvenient ridge there by use of plain hex paper over the offending part. This could lead to greater parity, more effective use of the arms at one's disposal and, for all I know, greater credibility.

I suddenly have the thought (another one) that all this is probably wildly unoriginal. If so, don't blame me - these things happen so rarely one can never be sure of the value of what comes out. Anyway perhaps you could use a new lining for your waste-paper basket.

One final line .... suggested reading for wargamers' younger children. "Once upon a time, there was an organisation known as Poultron Press....." For the uninstructed, that is the opening line of a Grim Fairy Tale.....

Cheers,

Eric.

\*Potential designers please note Eric's suggestion. As he remarks, in a bit of the letter I red-pencilled (for brevity, Eric, I assure you!), the idea could not be applied to games with a strict historical basis, where the terrain is fixed. However for such games as TAC14 (where different scenarios are available) or Blitzkreig (which is fictitious) the idea could have considerable value in application.

Actually, it has been tried before, in two senses, though not to such an extent as Eric visualises. The first attempt to make a board wargame with variable terrain, as far as I know, was Combat, produced by Ariel in this country - and not a bad game either. The game contained two board halves, covered in glossy surfacing, and laid out in squares. Terrain came on polythene-type sheets, which could be cut to the required size and shape, using the squares for orientation. The terrain features were then stuck on the board, in much the same manner as you stick your car licence onto the windscreen. When the set has only been used a few times, there is good adhesion. However, after a time, the adhesive properties lessened.

I can recommend Combat to anyone who has a small son or daughter interested in wargaming, but not yet old enough to cope with Avalon Hill games. Wives also. The rules are only moderate, and could do with re-writing. However it's not a bad introductory game, and sells for around 25/-, as I remember.

The other attempt at variable terrain came from Avalon Hill with Kriegspiel. Actually this isn't a very good attempt - they merely construct the playing boards so as to fit together in a variety of ways. Thus you aren't really changing the terrain, merely changing its relative position.

Thanks for the suggestion, Eric. djt\*

From Fred Davis, 5307 Carriage Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21229.

Dear Don,

The October issue of ALBION only just arrived at my doorstep yesterday (November 6th). In case you're keeping any records of how long ALBION takes to get to various spots in the world, that was just one day short of 5 weeks.

I am really enjoying reading the serial "A British Idiot in America". I can hardly wait for you to reach Maryland. As you know, I am also a railfan, especially a subway fan. I wish I had thought to give you a briefing on the New York subway before you came. A brisk six-month training course, with time out for psycho-therapy, should be sufficient to make you feel at home in New York. I hope that the next time you visit America you'll get a chance to see the more modern system operating in Montreal, or Philadelphia's new Lindenwald Line, which is automated somewhat similarly to the Victoria Line in London. Can you imagine my situation in the Moscow subway, where I couldn't even read the station names? Fortunately, I did have a subversive capitalistic map of the system, but I had to keep a careful count of the stations to know when to get off. If you can get back here in 1973, we may have a rapid transit system operating in Washington by that time, but it will be a long, long time before Baltimore's system is operating.

Please let me know whether you ever got a seventh player for Abstraction. Inge is flying home from Germany in Saturday November 21st with her Aunt. I will be very glad to see her again. I've been able to 'cook' for myself, but .....

Regards,  
Fred.

\*The matter of the Abstraction game (an interesting, and perhaps more realistic, Diplomacy variant invented by Fred) is dealt with later in this issue. djt\*

From John McCallum, P.O.Box 6, Ralston, Alberta, Canada.

Dear Don,

I sent that issue of SerenDip that dealt with retreats to all of your non-American readers. I had originally intended to send it to all your readers but there were a number of calls for it, for some reason, so I didn't have enough copies to do that. However, the copies to your readers went out a week or so after your own copy did. I would think that most would have received it in the last week of October, or thereabouts. Sorry that I didn't let you know, as it would have saved you the trouble of copying part of it in ALBION; you could have just gone ahead with your own comments. You say it was very hot in Washington on your visit. Never visit the American east coast, or any of the USA east of the Mississippi, in July or August. It is all right if you go as far north as Maine or Vermont but, otherwise, you are bound to swelter. I will never forget one July I spent in Boston. My plan of survival was to drink as much iced tea as possible all through the daylight hours, and as much beer as possible in the evening. Though such a diet produces a reaction like unto Christopher's.

Best regards,

John.

\*This extract explains to non-American readers the appearance of a copy of SerenDip in their mail. My sincere thanks to John for going to the trouble and expense of sending all these copies to acquaint everyone with the details of the retreat situation, dealt with in ALBION 23. It was time ALBION readers got to see a sensible Diplomacy magazine for a change.

As to the temperature in Washington, read the article on our stay with Don Miller, which appears later this issue. djt\*

From Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, New York 11104.

Dear Don,

Your description of N.Y. was rather amusing so to further the course of Anglo-American Hostility I have enclosed a subway map of New York. This map, by the way, is about the best ever made of the subway system as it is the only one that tells you exactly what trains make what stops at each specific station. Previous maps merely told which of the three lines (IRT, BMT, IND) went to each stop. As each line had between 8-15 different train routes that generally overlapped, you can see how confusing it could get.

As for Mr. Gosden and his fellow types .... they abound New York streets like beggars on a Sunday morning. By lucky chance you only came over one of the less powerful idiots of their type. By the way you attribute in part your getting the cash because you were not included amongst a list of Well-known Drug Peddlars, White Slave Traders etc. Allow me to reassure you that it was only because you were listed that he even paid attention to you for so long.

As for the Empire State Building .... you missed the World Trade Centre. It is a double-tower job that has just passed the Empire State and should be about 50-100 feet taller than it. I don't know about being the best city in the world but we sure are the tallest.

Edi.

\*I have omitted some parts of Eddi's letter which deal with S&T games - these will appear later this issue.

Bob Johnson got me a map of the subway just before we left. However I still can't make much sense of it. Must be just stupid.

I think Bob pointed out the World Trade Centre building, at the time a mere 50 stories high, when we were in Battery Park awaiting transport to Liberty Island. Distances aren't easy to judge, but it looked to be on Broadway, perhaps somewhere near City Hall. Anywhere near? djt\*

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### The Abstraction Variant.

In issue 11 (oh those halcyon days of early ALBION!) we printed the rules of Abstraction, a Diplomacy variant invented by Fred Davis, with additions by Rod Walker. We also enclosed the Abstraction map with the issue. I announced the availability of a game to be run in ALBION, and settled back to watch for results.

We soon got five players signed up for the game, but never seemed to get round to seven. At the time, most of the readers of ALBION were new to Diplomacy anyway, so perhaps they weren't too keen to try a variant until they had got more experience with the standard game.

The situation has changed a bit since then, however, and it may be that we could now assemble seven players. The only snag to this is that issue 11 is out of print, so anyone who hasn't got a copy won't be able to get hold of the Abstraction rules.

ALBION comes to the rescue again! Next issue - or, at the latest, the one after - we will re-print the entire Abstraction rules and map, including one or two minor variations to the rules which have been agreed since issue 11 was published. At the same time I will announce an opening for the game. I hope we can get seven players this time - perhaps including the inventor, although I know Fred would prefer other people to test his brainchild. It might even be possible to get seven players from the British Isles, which would allow the game to run on short deadlines.

Anyway, we'll see what happens. Just to whet your appetite, here's a short description of the game.

The standard rules of Diplomacy are used for the most part, although there are alterations to some rules, principally to those dealing with convoys. There are 45 supply centres instead of the usual 34. There are also several additional provinces, including the entire northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Most great powers have 8 provinces, Russia has 10. Most great powers start with four units on the board, Russia with five. Switzerland is passable. Initial placement of units; normal Diplomacy procedures (of having a certain type of unit in a certain starting place each time) are not followed. Instead there are building variations permitted, whereby England could, say, start the game with four fleets.

The first move of the game is July 1914, and each move takes a month. There are therefore four building seasons per year. Convoy by normal methods is allowed only if a single sea-space is crossed. When longer convoys are required, there are special rules to be applied.

It all adds up to an interesting-looking game, and I hope enough people will be interested, when the rules are printed, to give it a try.

A BRITISH IDIOT IN AMERICA.

Being the totally biased and inaccurate account of the three-week holiday in the U.S.A. made by the editor, his wife and four-year-old son.

Part iv. Washington D.C.

**Starring:** Don and Stella Miller.  
Stephen and Sharon.

Also appearing:           The American Grunt and Groan Brigade.  
An obaervant ice-cream parlourman.

[illegible]

Omar and Sua drove us to Buffalo airport, pausing on the way to let Margarat spend more of my money. We read, in the newspapers, of the British dock strike and of the temperature and humidity in Washington.

The flight was delayed, as it happened, which gave us the chance to write some postcards to the AHIKS folks at home who, we gathered, we likely to be without food and water for weeks unless the dockers went back to work again. Har Har, thought we, just as long as it's over before we get back. Totally unselfish, that's us.

The postcard plan was later to blow a fuse (and not the only thing to do so) since a certain person who shall be nameless failed to put airmail stamps on the cards when they were posted the next day, which means that they will probably arrive after the Christmas rush. Christmas 1975, that is. The point is that they weren't accepting surface mail at the time because of the British dockers.

Anyway, we sat in the departure lounge writing cards, while Christopher tried, without success, to persuade the man to allow him to make an important announcement over the public address system.

Washington National Airport stretches out for miles in all directions, and we were virtually in their flight circuit when we took off from Buffalo. We got out of the plane and looked in awe at the buildings, thinking that somewhere in this vast place would be Don Miller, and how on earth were we going to find him. However, no sooner had we entered the building than we were accosted by a large black eye-patch, attached to someone who looked like one of those fellows from the Spanish Main. We expected him to say 'Avast there, me hearties'. Instead he introduced himself as Don Miller, having another bout of the eye trouble which has delayed the excellent Diplomania in the past. When you know how many magazines Don produces, you see why he has eye trouble.

We also met Don's son Stephen, who was most aggrieved we hadn't arranged to land at Dulles airport; Stephen is a plane fan, but had seen National many times, and was raring for a look at Dulles. However he forgave us, and helped out in the new American Game called Find Your Car In The Carpark, if you can. With eventual success. The trouble isn't really finding the car - it's in finding which of the hundreds of parks houses it.

Don drove us to his house at Wheaton, on the outskirts of Washington, by a route which allowed us to see the White House and surrounding monuments from just across the Potomac. We also saw quite a lot of the Washington rush-hour traffic. It was very hot indeed, and we were glad to reach 12315 Judson Road and to relax. We met Stella, Don's wife, who had been born in England and therefore completely understood our discomfort with the heat. Also Don's daughter, Sharon; Christopher - something of a womaniser even in his tender years, took to Sharon straight away.

Despite the fact that we had only made a relatively short journey, we found that the terrible heat and humidity were too much for us, and we hardly had the energy to remain seated. Don reclined back in a superb chair, which tilts back to the required angle, enabling him to reach his drink (always necessary in that heat) and watch the television in complete comfort.

Don and Stella had very kindly arranged that we should sleep in the air-conditioned bedroom, they having vacated it to sleep in other, less cool, parts of the house. We were eternally grateful to them for this most generous arrangement; I doubt if we would have survived otherwise. Don probably had second thoughts about the idea, however, when I turned on the air-conditioner and immediately blew every fuse in Wheaton. The entire local street lighting etc. was dimmed while we struggled to get some cold air around us.

Don then showed me his collection of science fiction books and magazines. I must go on record here by saying that his collection of s.f. magazines must be second to none - literally. He has magazines going back into the 1920s, and, I think, every issue of every s.f. magazine ever produced in the USA, and probably most of those produced in England and elsewhere also. The eye boggled at the rows of shelves, stacked high with material, which took up most of the space in the basement, leaving just enough room for Stella to do her washing and for Stephen to set up his train layout on the table-tennis table. The train, of course, kept Christopher amused for many an hour, and it wasn't long before he was asking his dad for a duplicate.

As if this wasn't enough, we then looked at the games collection housed in Don's study. Don doesn't go in much for the ordinary commercial games, although he has perhaps a couple of dozen or so. However the most part of his collection consists of rare and obsolete games, some of which will be mentioned later. Not obsolete - the word implies they are no more any use, whereas the reverse is true of Don's games. He is fascinated by the idea of resurrecting games of skill which have, for one reason or another, been overlooked in library books or private collections for years, and collects as many as he can lay his hands on. The result is an incomparable collection - enough to gladden the heart of any enthusiast.

The weather dictated an early night, preceded by a quiet evening talking and watching the television.

Now, for those of you who switch on ITV at 4 p.m. every Saturday - if you think British wrestling looks contrived, you should see the stuff they put out on the air in America. Apparently they have abandoned all pretence of skill, and produce a series of 'bouts' guaranteed to satisfy the most sadistic of the audience. As I recall, the entire first round of one particular heavyweight fight was taken up by the two contenders (each about 570 pounds, and that's only the head) walking round each other and growling, hitting the referee every so often just to keep in practice. Every so often one of them lunged for the other, but found himself grabbing at thin air as his opponent leaped the ropes, ran round the ring twice, then crawled back, kicking the ref on the way. The crowd shrieked and roared, and Margaret and I (accustomed to the relatively civilised bouts of Mick McManus, Jackie Pallo and Steve Logan) watched in pure amazement.

The fight ended in a knockout, although the means by which this was administered weren't entirely clear. One minute everything was fine, with both parties growling to the full, the next minute one party was horizontal, being carried to the door, while the other looked around him in primitive pleasure. An Act of God, I think the MC said. A farce, was my own opinion.

Don had promised a day of games the next morning, so we were up bright and early, to walk up the road and buy cigarettes. Locals gazed at the amazing sight of people actually walking - in America, if want to visit a store 500 yards down the road, you take the car. For the simple reason that it's easier to cross the road in a car than on foot, and quicker. Margaret bought a massive tin of tobacco for her father; I later discovered that it constituted our entire ration of tobacco that we could bring back duty free, so I wasn't able to bring hundreds of cigarettes. That's a kind, thoughtful wife for you. Don and I sent the girls out shopping, stocked up with essentials like iced water, and started on the games.

The first game we tried was American football - rather a crafty game, really, with various strategies open to each side, and an illuminated board to work out the results. I finally won! Little did Don know that they had shown some American football on English television some months previously, so I had a better knowledge of the game than anticipated. And a modicum of luck.... However my triumph was to be short-lived. We then played a succession of board strategy games, as follows:

Conflict. A reasonably simple game using miniatures of tanks etc. Don hammered me the first game, so we set up another, when he promptly hammered me again. The third game went the same way, so I decided it was time to make a change, to

Wari. A game of the Mancala family, which revolves around the 'sowing' of beans, according to certain rules, in orderly rows of cups. Capture of beans brings about the win. Which it did, in Don's favour, three times in a row. I put away the box and got out

Phalanx. A board game of early Roman (or maybe Greek) times, using pieces of different shapes (triangular, square etc.) to represent the different unit types. Capture is by obtaining a phalanx - a sort of surrounding manoeuvre. According to the rules, you may only capture if you announce 'Phalanx!' at the same time as completing the manoeuvre, and soon the air was full of Don's joyous shouts of 'PHALANX!' while my archers, syntagma etc. were swept into the box. This is a most fascinating game, using unusual methods of movement and capture. I gather it isn't available in the USA at the moment, but if any reader comes across it in a store, grab it, and I will pay anything, even unto half my kingdom. After three games, we moved on to

Lunch. A game at which I always excel. We spared the food some time, then got back to the boards again, the girls disappearing to Wheaton Plaza.

The Jungle Game. This is one of the non-commercial games, whose rules appear in the Games Bureau Rulesheet Portfolio number 1. Animals of various degrees of hunger and ferocity roam the jungle, eating each other. It sounds simple, but it is in fact a most interesting little game, and the air once again rang to the happy sounds of two grown men roaring like lions, bellowing like elephants, squeaking like mice, and chewing like virtually everything. Three games of this, and we moved to

Rimau-Rimau. Another of the games in the Rulesheet Portfolio. This one concerns two tigers and a band of hunters, and is another interesting game of strategy. Three games of this, then on to familiar ground and, for me, a chance to win for a change, with

Balya Cricket. I imagine most readers have played this game at one time or another. The bowler rolls a ball down a chute, while the batsman attempts to hit it using a bat suspended from a hook, controlled by string. I thought that at long last my British training would not fail me, all the battles of the world having been won on the playing fields of Eton, or something. My



victory will be measured in terms of innings, I thought optimistically. I then discovered that Don was a budding John Edrich at one end, and a fully-fledged John Snow at the other, and he beat me soundly, with some help from Stephen. The stiff upper lip started to sag.

I was therefore rather pleased when Stella announced the evening meal, since that prevented Don from beating me again. We ate on the screened porch - a real bonus, this, since if you venture out of doors after dark the mosquitos get you, without regard for age, sex or nationality, yet we felt much in need of the coolth of the evening.

The rest of the evening was spent playing Mah Jongg, which I managed to win, much to Margaret's disgust.

We drove out into the countryside the next day to see something of the locality. The first stop was at a recreation park, where Christopher dragged us round the small zoo, onto a train ride in a miniature train - whose compartments had not been built to house Englishmen with beer pouches - and into a play area which stretched for acres, and contained things you could climb into/onto/around/over/under, chutes and goodness knows what else. Ice-cream was near at hand, and the three younger members of the party enjoyed themselves enormously, the four adults sitting in the seats reserved for the aged and infirm, wishing we were young again.

Another run through the countryside, and a stop at an ice-cream parlour. I gave the order in a faultless Brooklyn accent, and the man behind the counter said 'Oh, so you're English, are you?' and chatted for a while about his trip to England the year before. The ice-cream parlour is something of a national speciality - there are at least forty - yes, forty - different flavours of ice-cream, soda etc., and they don't use teaspoons for scoops like we do over here. The one Don took us to was very comfortably furnished, and you could sit down and enjoy the tasty food, appreciating the cool air at the same time. Margaret, who doesn't normally go in for this sort of thing, ordered a large glass with four colours of ice-cream topped, if my memory serves me correctly, with chocolate flakes. Her eyes were larger than her stomach, however, and she eventually had to give up unfinished.

We then drove to a small private airfield near Wheaton - a sort of millionaires' paradise, which accomodated a couple of hundred private planes. We spent the remainder of the afternoon watching the rich burn up fuel, Stephen making copious notes in his book.

Then we drove back to Wheaton, to food, a few games of table-tennis, Yahtzee and bed. Our last night in Wheaton, since we were due to drive to Annapolis on the morrow to meet Bob McLaughlin.

.....  
Wheaton is rather like Timperley, in the sense that they are both near to a big city, yet not far from the surrounding countryside. We were disappointed that the weather didn't allow us to see more of Washington, but to walk even a short distance in that heat was wearing, and the prospect of following Margaret and Christopher round the shops didn't exactly appeal. Anyway, we saved money as well.

Don and Stella were wonderful, and Stephen and Sharon are to be congratulated especially for coping with the energetic Christopher. I have omitted from the report mention of all the chats Don and I had about games, Diplomacy etc. Since Don was a founder member of the Games Bureau, he is a mine of information and interesting history, and on several instances Stella and Margaret had to force us to pack up our games, or talk, to eat, sleep or whatever. I must

So our sincere thanks to you all, Don Stella, Stephen and Sharon! Hope your visit to England won't be far away.

In part v of the series, next issue, you will meet Bob McLaughlin, his family, and the wonderful town of Annapolis. You will receive even more proof that the writer of this series is as demented as you have suspected all along, for instance:-

**WE MEET THE BIG CHEESE HIMSELF!**

A CO-OPERATIVE BANK OFFICIAL!

## THE AUTOMATIC YARD-ARM ADJUSTER!!

## SOME LUSCIOUS STEAKS!

SOME LUSCIOUS GIRLS!

plus more, if you can stand it. Note that part v will probably be the last part of the series. Whew!

\* \* \* \* \*

### Miscellany on Games from Strategy and Tactics.

In recent weeks I have had a few letters from Edi Birsan, each containing some information on either Deployment (ALBION game review number 7) and The Flight of the Goeben (ALBION game review number 9). These are summarised below.

## Deployment.

'Thanks for the nice write-up ..... as I wrote the rules to this one I appreciate the word about clarity. As for the business of artillery defending with its highest factor; this was not the intent of the rule as brought out in play-testing. No matter from what range attacked, the artillery defends with its highest factor when attacked from within its field of fire.'

## The Flight of the Goeben.

'A few clarifications I picked up from Red. Magdeburg always appears with Moltke. When both Goeben and Moltke are used, points are assigned on the basis of either or both, not double. If Goeben enters the Dardanelles, the German gets 100 points. If both enter, the German still only gets 100 points. If both are sunk then the British get double points, naturally.'

'A little problem develops in the matter of fast chase speed - players have to indicate to each other when they are doing it, aa the other player can see when he moves his emergency speed index down each time. This should be done off the board and kept secret. '

'As for bombing the coast; we generally play that it can not be done until Britain goes to war. The idea is strictly for play balance.'

'The Moltke, and Magdeburg, only appear in the later options when a 5 or 6 is rolled on the German optional table. When the Moltke does appear, the victory conditions are applied to it just as if it were the Goeben. Thus, either the Goeben or Moltke enter Dardanelles - 100 points.'

Thanks for these comments, Edi. I welcome comments on any of the S&T games for printing in ALBION - either rule clarifications or articles on the games themselves. This is also true of AH games, of course, but they have, for the most part, been over-covered in the General already.

Dear Readers. I'm really very sorry, but I can no longer put off the terrible fate which now awaits you, so if you are all sitting uncomfortably, I will begin.

ALBION 69/1 from the French Viewpoint.

Firstly let me comment on djt's critique of this game. He starts off by suggesting that there is a possibility of him talking through his hat. This is quite absurd, of course, since he can't afford one. However if we do not take his statement literally, we can agree that he has been misled in certain instances due to the fact that he had little idea what went on behind the Political Scenes. I will therefore try to cast some light on this area of darkness whilst giving my reactions and impressions of the main incidents which took place during the game.

As djt quite correctly stated, we were all very new to the arts of diplomacy, and I, having little or no idea what the hell to do, decided to wage an aggressive war against Germany with the support of Russia and England. After all, I told myself, it worked in reality back in 1914 - why should it not do so again? Having resolved to follow this course of action I contacted both England and Russia and formed an alliance to the detriment of Germany. I also contacted Italy and formed a non-aggression pact with him in order to secure my southern flank.

You can see, even at this stage, blatant inexperience on my part. I had not stopped to think where I should go after the Fall of Germany, and all my treaties to date prevented me from expanding further without coming into conflict with one of my present allies. Fortunately events were kind to me, and my problems were solved, as we will see later.

Spring 1901 brought a nasty shock. England failed to move any of her units and my grand plans for Germany stayed, with the English forces, in splendid isolation. The only other surprise at this stage was Italy's unprecedented invasion of Austria. This event was, however, very pleasing to me since I was now assured that Italian attention would be focussed away from the fair shores of France.

Sparks flew from my pen as I furiously tried to undo the damage caused by England's lack of action, and - lo and behold! - in the Autumn Britannia condescended to move. All other countries took their objectives without any trouble, the only surprise being the lack of Austrian ambition in the Balkans.

As I have already mentioned, England's failure to move in the Spring of 1901 caused the infamous Charles de Gaul to take up pen and chastise his erring ally. The lack of response to these letters convinced me that my best bet now was, to put it crudely, clobber him. I therefore set about wooing Germany to my side, whilst at the same time advising Russia that England was still my close ally, and warning him against any aggressive move in that direction. The fact that Russia was taken in must show the lack of Russian diplomatic activity in this direction.

At first Germany wasn't sure whether to trust me or not, and the Spring of 1902 saw him launch attacks on my frontiers. However my units remained in defensive postures as promised. Russia moved forces up to the Russo-German border, an act which no doubt forced Germany's hand with regard to my peace proposals. This of course is what I had hoped for, since Russia had not been informed of my change in policy, and was still under the impression that I considered Germany to be a common enemy. The Russians also siezed Norway, despite a half-hearted attempt by England to prevent this; at this stage England ceased to be an influential power and John Munro submerged himself in a big basin of self-pity and retired from the game somewhat ungracefully.

Things started to look a bit black for Italy as Turkey ranged her forces alongside Austria's, and it was only thanks to some very astute play by John Robertson that Italy defied vastly superior forcea for some considerable time.

Autumn 1902 brought great joy to the French powers - not only did the German armies on the Western Front atand passively, but also their army in Eastern Germany attacked Warsaw, thus committing a definite act of war against Russia. Things were looking better and better for me. Italy fully engaged in the Med., Germany and Russia about to plunge into war, and Russia under the impression that England was still a participant to be reckoned, thanks to my big bluff. By the time Chris realised the truth it would be too late.

Spring 1903 sees the war between Germany and Russia continue in earnest, while Italy continues to defy Turkey and Austria. However John was well aware that he could not hold out for ever, and requested French aid in the matter. In response to the appeal a French fleet was dispatched to the Med. whilst in the main theatre of operations my invasion fleets set sail.

Autumn 1903 not only sees the successful invasion of England, with London and Liverpool falling to the forces of the gallant French, but also the start of French influence in the Med. From this point in time French forcea moved into this area in a steady stream with the blessing of Italy, who was only too glad to receive their aid.

In Spring 1904 we have the first instance of combined Franco/German and Franco/Italian moves, all succeasful, the former to the detriment of Russia, and the latter thwarting the movea of Abdul Wood the Terrible Turk. I was also able, at this time, to move my army from Belgium to the Ruhr; its purpose was to support the German army in Munich against possible Austro/Russian attack. Munich was the corner-stone in the western defences. This army also served the secondary purpose of being a good arguing point should Germany decide to cut up rough with me.

We now delve back into the devioua world of doubtful diplomacy, realising that Russia could not be happy about my occupation of England, and guessing that he would try in some way to interfere with my capture of Edinburgh. I wrote to Chris warning him against interference in this matter in any way, shape or form. He duly obliged in Autumn 1904 by supporting the English army against my attack. I could now in all justification discard all previous treaties which exiated between Russia and myself and draw the sword to defend the honour of France. War was declared and I started laying plans to gain full control of the Northern Seas prior to my attacking Scandanavia. The elimination of England waa now a secondary objective which could be dealt with at my leisure.

The war between Russia and Germany was now swinging against the latter, and he was obliged to pull back troops from the French border in order to supple-ment his defence in the east. The battle for control of the Med. continued with the build-up of French forces. This campaign continued in a very erratic way for some time with neither side gaining the upper hand until France decided to take a firm grip of the situation.

Spring 1905, and France and Russia come into direct conflict for the first time, the results being inconclusive at this stage, but French reinforcements are being rushed to the spot. Back on the eastern front Germany regains some ground when Russia inexplicably goes on the defensive. Chris was obviously worrying about the growing menace in the north, and was now shifting forces to this area - too late, as it happens. From now to the end of the game he was obviously caught between two fires, not knowing whether to attack or defend against both Germany and myself. This proved to be his undoing. The war in the Med. continued in a satisfactory manner; progress here was slow but sure, and final victory in this area waa certain. Or so I thought at the

time.

Autumn 1905, and we find a state of complete chaos, with units of the four antagonists hopelessly intermingled, in the Med. In the north things are looking better, with the French navy now outnumbering the Russians by three to two. French mastery in this area is now more than a possibility. Russian actions at this stage are very hard to follow - she loses all initiative, by switching from the offensive to the defensive, and never regains it again. Spring 1906 and the continuing story of Peyton Place. The Med. is in a continued state of turmoil, with the advantage now going to the eastern Powers. At the request of the Italian Government, French forces now occupy Rome in order to deny this fair city to the grasping hands of the Austrians. The English army, which had been chased out of Edinburgh the previous year, is now evicted from Liverpool and goes into retirement in the hills of Welsh Wales. The war on the eastern front takes an unexpected twist when Germany captures Warsaw - a good thing for me since it diverted Russia's attention away from the high seas and back to this area.

In Autumn England's downfall is complete, the Russian navy is pushed back toward its homeland whilst her armies take up positions for yet another push on Germany - true 1914-18 stuff, this. The French fleet in Rome moves on to Naples whilst Italy re-occupies Rome. She has decided that it is better to lose a supply centre temporarily to a friend rather than lose it permanently to a foe. The fighting here was at last swinging our way; however there was a serious breach in relations between France and Italy, caused by the unsatisfactory results achieved in the campaign.

It struck me that to continue supporting Italy was really quite senseless - she was now a burden on my resources rather than an asset to the French Cause. Consequently I laid plans for her destruction. For some time now I had been aware of Turkey's disillusionment with the war; therefore I approached David and suggested peace terms in return for his withdrawal from the area. Being somewhat frustrated at his lack of progress in the Med. he allowed himself to be persuaded, and in the Spring of 1907 moved his forces to threaten Russia's undefended supply centres, whilst Italy unwittingly set herself up for the chop. My navy took a firm control of the northern seas prior to an assault on Norway, whilst Austria stirred herself at last and lined her armies along the Austro/German border.

We didn't have long to wait to find out what her intentions were - with the aid of Austria, Russia regained Warsaw. However Austria was still loth to use the full power of her armies against Germany. Turkey had obviously had an attack of conscience, and now moved all his forces back to their previous positions. However this was to no avail, as I had managed to buy all the time I required for the destruction of Italy. Italy went down without knowing what had hit her. Norway was also occupied by an amphibious attack, and I was on the home straight at last, with thirteen units and no-one in a position to do much about it.

My only fear at this stage was that Germany might panic at the fate of Italy and line herself alongside the eastern Powers. Fortunately her deep mistrust of Russia and Austria prevented her from coming to terms with them.

Spring 1908, and French forces continue to close in on Russia whilst Germany, fearful of an attack from me, stands and supports all round. French forces in the Med. have now taken a firm control of this area and are pushing the enemy back, whilst my newly-arrived reinforcements move towards the German frontier as a precaution against possible attack.

After the fall of Italy I contacted Germany and gave my assurance that he had nothing to fear from me as long as he continued to act as an ally. However in

Autumn of this year he attempted to occupy Sweden, when it was quite obvious that the French were about to do so. Another letter was sent to Germany warning her against repeating such an act, and in the Spring of 1909 she adhered to this advice. Unfortunately for her, this loyalty was short-lived. At this time Italy was completely occupied by the French, all Scandinavia was likewise occupied, and it was just a matter of time before I took the final three centres from Russia and Austria.

These two countries had sunk into a state of inactivity and Turkey, deciding on a final fling, stabbed them both in the backs by occupying Rumania and Serbia. It was also in the fateful Autumn of 1909 that Germany turned traitor and attacked Sweden yet again, despite my earlier warning. Since he could no longer be trusted there was nothing for it but to wind up the game at his expense. Spring 1910 was spent setting Germany up for the final crunch, Kiel and Holland were occupied, and Munich was left at my mercy. Autumn 1910 and the Coup de Gaul was administered. Munich is occupied, and it is all over with, Turkey still running amock in the Balkans.

I think Don summed up this game quite well, and therefore I do not intend to go into it again. The purpose of this superlative piece of literature, as I said at the beginning, is to give an insight to my impressions of the game, and of other players' actions and intentions. Some of it is guess-work, and I would be very glad to have reactions from other players.

It just remains for me to thank you all (if any) for wading through all this load.

I will now, in the true tradition of all great authors, make a dedication:-

- a) to Don Turnbull, who hasn't yet seen what he has to type, and
- b) to my wonderful fiancée who volunteered to take over as chief scribe when my own writing hand gave out.

Malcolm Watson.

\*When I asked Malcolm to write 'a short account' of his own reactions to the game I little dreamed it would run so long, and be presented to me 24 hours before publication day. However we have been rude to Malcolm in these pages at various times in the past, and perhaps we should do him a good turn for a change. Hence the complete inclusion of the above erudite piece of writing. djt\*

#### Explanatory Notes - AHIKS etc.

Recently there have been many new subscribers to ALBION, and many more people enquiring about the magazine. Quite a lot of these have asked, in various ways, just what are the meanings of the mysterious sets of initials AH, AHIKS, K, S&T etc. Having a bit of spare space left to fill, I thought it might not be a bad idea to tell everyone, and particularly the newcomers, what it is all about. Let's start with AH - the Avalon Hill Company. This firm has been manufacturing board wargames for over ten years now, from its home in Baltimore, Maryland. The games have ranged from the simple Tactics II, Afrika Korps etc. to the monster 1914, Jutland and Anzio. Their products can be obtained over here, although they are quite expensive due to import duties etc. etc. Anyone who wants to get one of the AH games should write to Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex, who carries a fair selection in the stock of CHD - Cranwell House Developments. Other, more expensive, sources of these games exist in England - addresses on application to me if Michael hasn't got the game you want.

Since AH started marketing their games, a lot of enthusiasm for the boardgaming

hobby has developed, mainly in the USA and mainly around the AH products. Clubs have been formed extensively in the USA, principally staffed by teenagers, who conduct campaigns amongst themselves, award each other ranks etc. A few less excitable wargamers decided that this sort of club was not for them, and got together to form AHIKS - Avalon Hill Intercontinental Kriegspiel Society. Rather a grandiose title, which is perhaps to be changed soon. The purpose of AHIKS is to provide means whereby interested players from all over the world can obtain opponents for postal play of AH-type games, face-to-face players being generally hard to find. AHIKS is divided into regions, of which the British region is one (this is a misnomer - the British region contains members from such foreign places as Belgium, Israel and Scotland, and is soon to get two new members from Sweden.)

K stands for Kommandeur, the AHIKS official magazine, edited and produced by Bob Johnson in Whippany, New Jersey. AHIKS members get the magazine free as part of their membership entitlement.

S&T stands for Strategy and Tactics, a magazine published in New York by an organisation called Poultron Press. They also produce a series of board wargames, called Test Series Games, much on the same lines as those from AH. Hence the abbreviation TSG.

Note that ALBION is not directly connected with AH, AHIKS or S&T. However there are strong links. First, most of the subscribers to ALBION are AHIKS members, which accounts for the fact that the AHIKS British Regional Bulletins are tacked onto the back of each ALBION - this saves time and space, and also advertises AHIKS to interested parties. Second, AHIKS has always had strong links with S&T - Chris Wagner, the founder of S&T, was one of the first AHIKS members. Also, I am meant to be some sort of agent for the Poultron Press products in this country, although at present the parent organisation doesn't seem to have remembered the arrangement.

So it's all simple, really, when you have been in on the thing from the start, and those who received ALBION issue 1 through their letter boxes some 18 months ago will be wondering why I'm bothering to write all this common knowledge. To which I reply - quite a few new readers of ALBION only know about wargaming via Diplomacy, perhaps not even dreaming that board wargames were manufactured and marketed. Perhaps this will encourage them to take up the hobby which we know to be fascinating and infuriating and a sure way to divorce; plus the attraction that Malcolm Watson is an AHIKS member, an AH game player, a K and ALBION reader, and a TSG tester, as well as all the other things that I daren't print.

Don Turnbull.

Which brings us to the end of ALBION 24. Please note that the next issue, slated for delivery on January 1st 1971, might get a bit delayed due to the usual chaos at Christmas and New Year. So please be patient. And, just in case we forget -

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

A reelly superb regional meeting, folks! Thanks to everyone for their support etc. You will find articles on the meeting below.

No enclosures this time. However, be warned! With the next bulletin you will be getting a request for subscriptions for 1970, so don't spend everything on Christmas shopping.

New Member.

Strictly speaking, Ivor Moseley joined just before the last bulletin was printed. However I didn't have his address etc. at the time, so here's bringing you up to date.

Ivor Moseley, 9 Turnlea Cloee, Knypersley Park, Biddulph, Staffordshire.

Ivor has Stalingrad and D-Day, and would like to start with a game of either - in fact you could probably twist his arm to take one of each.

It should be possible for Ivor and Simon Garrett (address in last bulletin) to get a Stalingrad going - please would you get in touch with each other? And with David Wood to errenge the icrk?

Welcome to AHIKS, Ivor! Hope you enjoy the games etc.

The Third AHIKS British Regional Meeting - Autumn 1970.

A normal weekend at the Sneyd Arms, Tunstall, Staffs. is a hectic affair. This hotel, situated beng in the centre of the swinging township, offers a number of attractions, among which is s large juke box. At weekends, therefore, it ie something of a Mecca for the local swingers, and the place is packed with bodies elmost permanently from opening time on Friday evening to chuck-out tims on Saturday night.

However the residents of Tunstall were in for a surprise late in October 1970 when David Wood selected the Sneyd Arms as the site for the third AHIKS British Region Meeting. David tells me that his choice was influenced by three factors - a quiet room in which the fighting could go on in relative peace and seclusion, e bevy of attractive bar-tenders, and the fact that they sold Double Diamond on draught.

Friday October 30th 1970. Michael Nsthercot end I picked up a lurching Malcolm Watson end drove towards Tunstall. Malcolm had just spent the last day with Illiffe Press, and had celebrated the fact with much intake of alcohol. We therefore viewed events of the evening with some foreboding - Malcolm is usually the life and soul of the party, but the mind boggled et whet he would get up to with a coneiderable start on the rsst of us in the beer stakes.

The rain sluiced down from the heavens in typical North England style, and we hed some difficulty in penetrating the gloom during the drive. However we finally made it in one piece and penetrated the fastness of the Sneyd Arms, already rocking discernibly on its foundations.

The first sight that met our eyes, on entering the hotel, wae Chrie Hancock in his well-known 'this bar will fall down unless I leen on it' poee. He asked me whether I had heard anything from Poultron Press, and on getting the predict-able reply he escorted us to the meeting place upstairs.

We met Bob Stuart and Ivor Moseley, already locked in conflict in Russia. Bob asked me what had happened to Poultron Prsss. He then insulted Malcolm, having waited twelve months for just this opportunity. We left them hurling ineults at each other.

We met John Poole, who asked whether I had heard from Poultron Prees, end Tony Jones, who asked whether Poultron Press was ectually just a figment of my vivid imagination. Then Ken Norris, Carl Eley and David Wood, who asked whet we would heve to drink. Some people havs the right sense of priorities.



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We were particularly pleased to meet Ken Norris for the first time at the meeting. We had all benefited from his work in the foundation of AHIKS, we had all heard of his games-skill, and of his illness. We were glad to see that Ken was fit and well, and ready to embark on his first meeting.

It was also nice to meet Carl and Ivor, both new members who were attending their first meeting. They wore on their faces that glazed look which always appears on meeting AHIKS members for the first time; however they seemed to recover from the initial shock.

Michael set up the Blitz board for the multi-commander game the next day, Ivor and Bob continued fighting, and the rest of us talked and imbibed some alcohol. A ferocious growl from the door announced the arrival of Henry Radice and Slasher II (I am assured that Slasher did the growling). Henry asked me when Poultron Press were going to deliver the goods.

The rafters rang with the happy sounds of clinking glasses, rattling dice and (from the Stuart/Watson corner) dire insults. The Third Regional Meeting was under way.

\* \* \*

The next morning Michael and I called on Malcolm to arouse him from his slumber. It was with some surprise that I found he was already up, and playing host to a 'friend' for breakfast. We dragged them apart and drove to Tunstall, where we toured the area for twenty minutes looking for a way into the car park.

Harry Tucker had arrived in the small hours, so the teams were ready for the centrepiece of the meeting - the multi-commander Blitz game. Ken headed the Blue team, with support from Bob and John. Ken blanched visibly when John announced he hadn't played the game before, but if someone would lend him the rulebook, he would be ready to start in a couple of minutes.

Harry commanded Red, with Henry and Tony on the staff. Slasher II stood by to lend support when needed.

Michael acted as gamesmaster, and has written a report on the game, so I will omit further mention.

Other games started in various corners of the room. David and Chris experimented with ARNHEM, a game which Michael had designed. From their comments I am sure we will be seeing much more of this game in the future.

Ivor and Carl played AK, while Malcolm and I continued with our investigations of Tactical Game 14. Eric Slack and Sheila Minion arrived, both asking about Poultron Press. They settled down to watch; Eric had broken his glasses, so couldn't play a game for fear of reading the factors wrong. Sheila made some remark about cowardice in the face of the enemy.

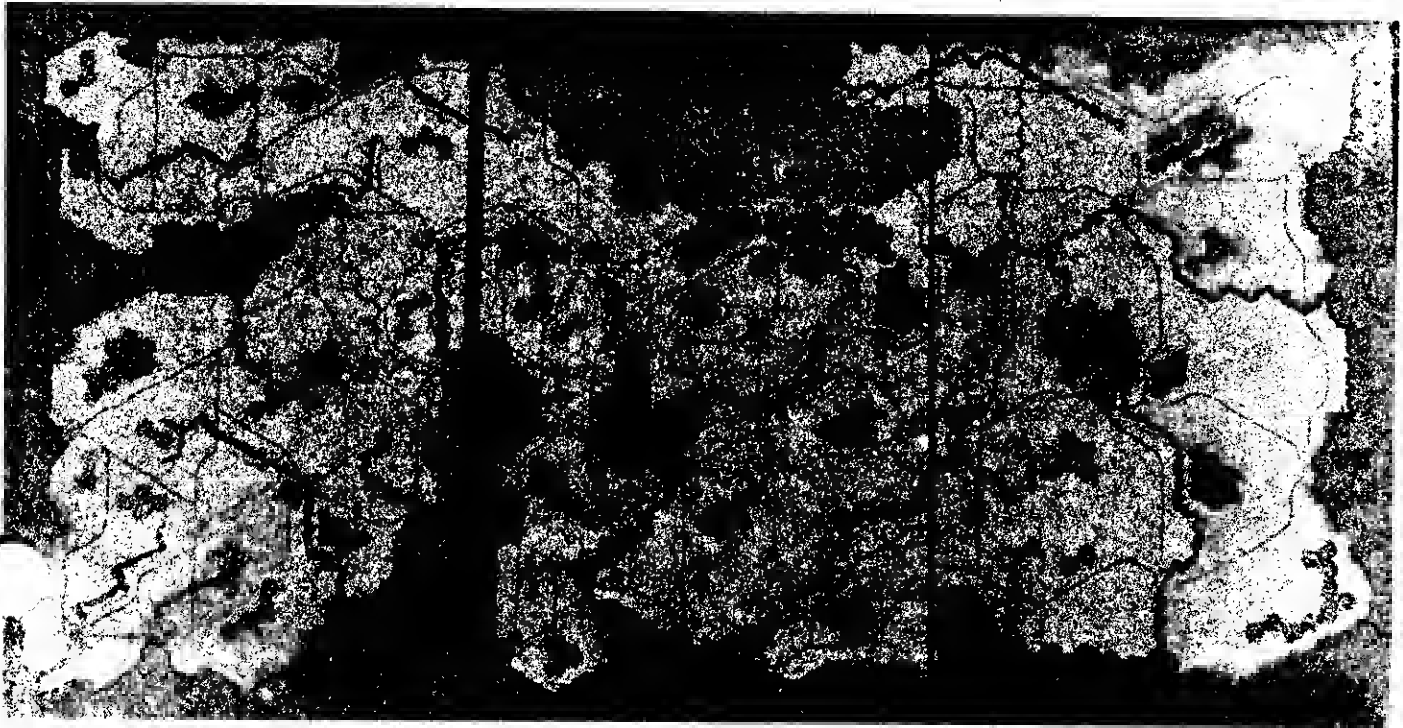
With breaks for lunch and other refreshments for the inner man, the games continued all day, the Blitz game coming to a close late in the afternoon. We ate dinner, ordered another three trays of drinks, and settled down to the games again, only dragging ourselves reluctantly off to bed when the rest of Tunstall was fast asleep.

The real trouble with these meetings is that they don't last long enough. I am sure that everyone would have welcomed another day, but the journeys which had to be made the next day effectively made the meeting a one-day affair. And it was a really magnificent affair.

I would like to thank everyone for their support at the meeting - it was most gratifying to see fifteen members there, some of whom had travelled considerable distances to attend. And on English roads, too. And we owe a special vote of thanks to David Wood, for arranging the whole thing.

Here's to the next time!

The space below is reserved for a photo of the Blitz board on which the action took place, supplied by Harry. I hope the print comes out on stencil - my apologies in advance if the thing below bears little resemblance to anything you have previously seen from AH.



Multi-Blitz. or The Desert Fox Rides Again. by Michael Nethercot.

The last casualty has been removed and a solid 14 hours of fiercely-contested hex terrain is neatly stowed away for another day - a British Region Convention is a shattering experience and test of endurance for contenders, lookers-on and Staffordshire barmaids alike. We English are often accused to taking our pleasures seriously - in fact this is perfectly true. But like all sweeping generalisations it gives a false impression to those who don't know us well. Where else could one find a collection of fanatics who behave so unfanatically? Perhaps the vast consumption of alcohol is something to do with it, for without proper lubrication the best of machinery grinds to a halt. The British Region is, if nothing else, always well oiled.

The weather is always bad in the North of England, and as the writer of this article lives in a more civilised part of the country, he was not at all surprised to discover that the natives of Tunstall have created an effective deterrent to ward off foreigners. They have blocked off the entrances and exits to the Municipal car parks; as a second line of defence the road signs and pedestrian crossings are deliberately sited to cause a maximum of confusion to the unwary. Our Regional Director narrowly missed driving through the entrance to the Town Hall, whilst scattering cloth-capped and clog-shod inhabitants in all directions. We came to the conclusion that the concrete bollards surrounding the open spaces in the centre of the town, and their placement across the majority of side streets, is a throw-back to our finest hour, when tank traps sprouted overnight like mushrooms. Which leads me directly to the meat of my report on

the multi-commander Blitz face-to-face confrontation.

The spectacular propaganda war which so magnificently emphasised the dramatic highlights of the battle started with a stunningly effective broadside from a Red army commander who will be called, in this report, the Desert Fox. "Blue" (I quote) "has flagrantly violated the territory of a Neutral State, indulging in a campaign of rapine, pillage and other dastardly acts". This immediately stopped all other games in the room; one member was reported to have rushed out into the street demanding an immediate transfer to the Blue Army. Now, no self-respecting CinC could possibly let such a statement go unanswered. The anticipated response was to the effect that "The Blue Army was merely engaged in operations to safeguard the integrity of neighbouring States from Red aggression".

The opposing sides had been fully briefed as to the procedures to be adopted during the course of the game, both in writing some weeks beforehand and again, immediately prior to the first move. The CinCs had obviously spent hours in preparing detailed plans which were to be the basis of a victorious and overwhelming campaign. As the sides were skilfully managed by commanders whose expertise and knowledge of Blitz is well known within the region, it was going to be a real humdinger. Of course the gamesmaster was out of his depth right from the start. He rapidly came to the conclusion that his best course would be to maintain a discreet anonymity, only speaking when spoken to; perhaps in time and with a little luck he would just quietly merge into the background.

The first move saw a mad scramble for positional advantage, with Minor One completely occupied by Blue at a cost of 8 factors. Red invaded Minor Five and Minor Three losing 12 factors. I must admit that I completely forgot about throwing for weather, an omission which did not pass unnoticed by the Red CinC, who gently reminded me of my error. Needless to say I was not allowed to repeat the mistake.

Turn Two, and the first major land battle, in the Koufax Desert. We were all glad to see our old friend the Desert Fox well dug in and fully prepared to deal with any eventuality, even those which might be consequent upon the activities of a mammoth bulldog. This animal was roaming the room on the end of a heavy metal chain. As a confirmed dog lover, your writer was not at all dismayed, but he had no doubt that any Red reverse would result in immediate retaliation, of a kind unparalleled in the history of our Society. Blue of course continued the aggression by crossing the border into Minor Four and Minor Two, aided by airdrops into YY33. The game was undoubtedly hotting up, with both sides evenly balanced and in contact along the whole width of the board. Both Commanders-in-Chief were beginning to get worried looks.

Anyone interested will be pleased to know that the average turn takes about an hour to complete in a multi-commander face-to-face game of this type. This of course includes time taken up in resolving combat and in checking disputed moves, time taken up unloading the intake of liquid refreshment, and time taken up in dealing with the continual stream of advice, bawdy comment, and downright provocations arriving from all corners of the games area.

At about this stage I decided that the rule about written messages between CinCs and their subordinate commanders should be relaxed. In truth, and as proof of my impartiality, I had overlooked a number of 'irregular' conferences, but as the available supply of ballpoint pens and writing paper was disappearing at an alarming rate (I feel our canine companion might take some of the blame for this) there was no alternative but to allow a modicum of

verbal exchange. One of the commanders was so absorbed by the play that he attempted to swallow a message from his CinC, to prevent the enemy intelligence service from gaining a vital piece of information. His request for an issue of rice paper was refused.

Turn Four, a major battle of attrition on the central front - a nuclear strike on NN33. Result - Blue minus another 17 factors, Red minus 8. We depart for LUNCH.

Following a brief discussion we decided to end the game at the conclusion of turn seven. This was because most of us wanted to try our hands at other games before the end of the convention, and also there was the possibility that the game would slow down as the players became fatigued. For any reader who may be thinking of organising a multi-commander face-to-face game, I would advise him or her to remember that six or seven hours is about the maximum that most players can stand. This of course is during the daytime, when everyone starts wide awake and full of enthusiasm. Obviously the style of play would change after a long session, each side throwing caution to the winds, and going all out, to gain as many points as possible. Readers will probably realise that the gamesmaster had at least foreseen the likelihood of neither side obtaining an absolute win; for this reason he had suggested the institution of a points system. Harry Tucker kindly worked out a points value table in which each side obtains a score depending upon the number of cities held at the close of play, the value of each city varying according to its geographical position relative to Red or Blue. From the total score each side would lose points for combat factors eliminated by the opponent.

Turn Five. Clear weather. Another nuclear bomb. Blue lands on BBB54. The Desert Fox continues to throw sixes and is severely reprimanded. Red loses 28 points, Blue loses 35. Units are falling like ten-pins. Air activity increases, with the CinCs ordering repeated air strikes against hostile attacks. A time limit works wonders - it opens up the game and ensures a welter of mayhem. Nothing like a good punch-up.

Turn Six. Blue uses his SAC against the Desert Fox. On a knife-edge the contestants await the score. Red less 23, Blue less 15. It's going to be a close-run thing.

As the campaign's resident commentator so aptly interjects - 'Both sides are fighting with a total disregard for the lives of their men'. The gamesmaster thinks this is the understatement of the year. The situation is fast approaching crisis point.

A hush falls over the room, other tables empty as a crowd of spectators begins to gather around the scene of wild destruction. Invasion forces are being pushed back into the sea, bombers cloud the skies - one can almost smell the pungent fumes of battle.

The Climactic Turn Seven.

Red's final offensive has torn a gap in Blue's centre and, striking against targets outside effective fighter cover, the bomber swarm unloads a final crescendo of fury on airfields and ground formations alike. But Blue is still fighting hard. A fierce gleam in his eye, the Red commander makes his final fling. He airdrops behind the enemy's front, siezing a number of vital 20-point Blue cities.

With some justification it could be claimed that Red's final move would be suicide in a 'normal' Blitz encounter; perhaps the gamesmaster was wrong - he should have fixed the number of turns right from the start.

All good things come to an end, and as readers are waiting in a frenzy of anticipation, here is the result:-

Blue 120 City Points less 144 factors. -22 points.

Red 135 City Points less 100 factors. +35 points.

So ended the first AHIKS British Region face-to-face multi-commander contest.

General comment. That the game was a great success was entirely due to the skill, enthusiasm and good humour of the participants. Frankly the author had remarkably little to do, and was superfluous most of the time - there were only two decisions taken on rule interpretation.

I conclude by thanking all those who took part. The game was far closer than the points margin implies - so Ken, Harry, Henry, John, Tony and Bob - let's call it a draw!

Michael Nethercot.

As far as I am concerned, I think the game was a great idea, and made a really attractive centre-piece for the meeting. As well as thanking those who exposed themselves to battle fatigue, I want to thank Michael especially for getting the whole thing arranged and for his patience in gamesmastering. I sincerely hope we can have another multi-commander game at the next meeting - perhaps this time we could cook something up on the Barbarossa project, which many members enthuse about whenever the subject arises. I will be glad to hear from anyone who has ideas in this respect.

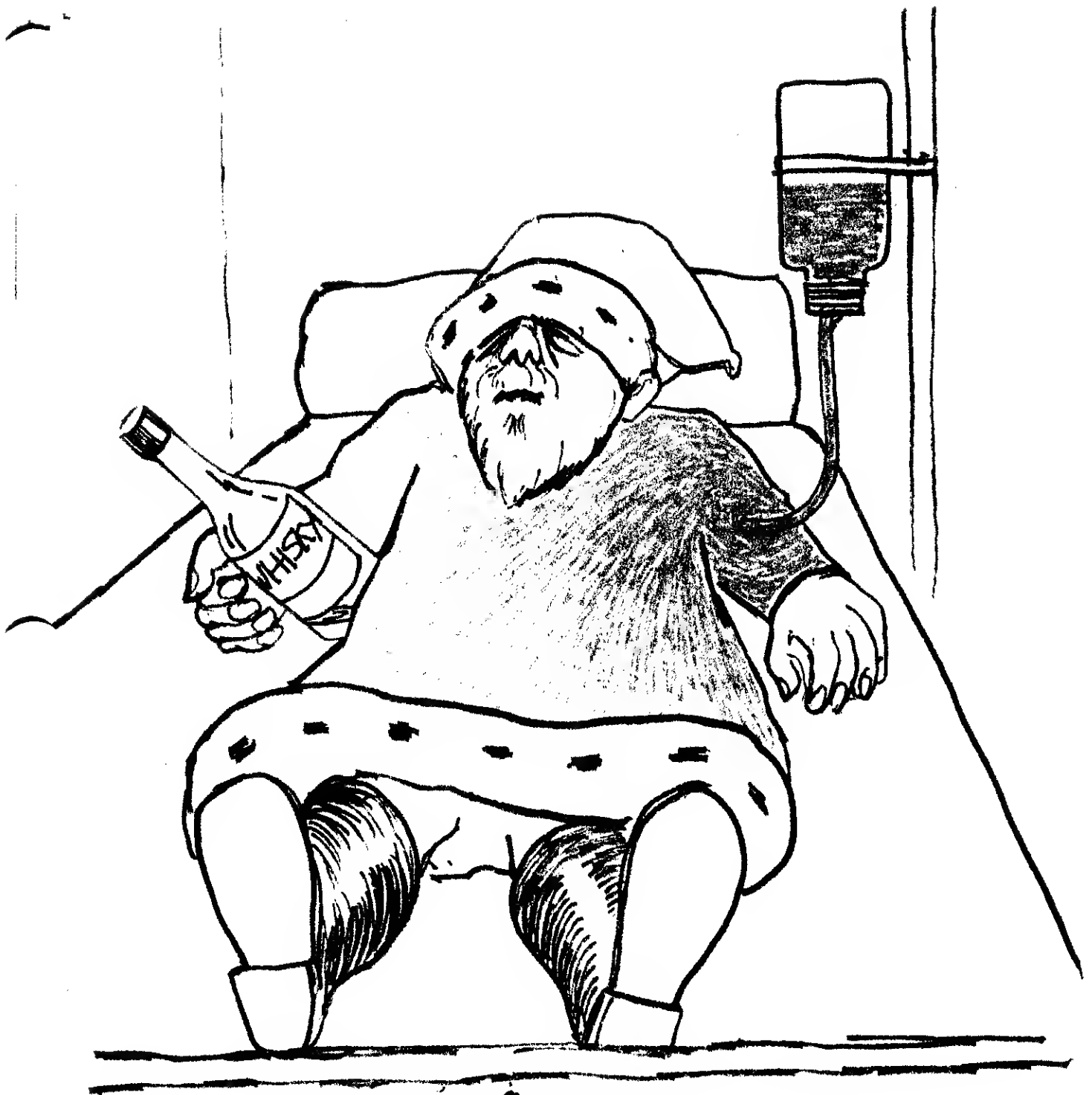
By the way, Harry Tucker volunteered (with everyone twisting his arm) to host the next meeting, which will be held on the south coast in March or April 1971. For further details watch this bulletin.

#### For Sale.

Second-hand Waterloo (Avalon Hill). Hardly used. £2-5-0d. Please apply to me if you want it - the seller is only a couple of miles away - and it's not Malcolm saving up to get married.

Nothing more for this bulletin as far as short articles are concerned. I'm afraid that space limitations don't allow the printing of the Colonel's Corner this time - it will go in the next issue without fail. Please let me have contributions for the January bulletin as early as possible. Christmas is going to take its usual toll, I suppose, and I will have to do things like entertain, eat etc. as well as writing a bulletin. The rest of this page will be filled with a photograph of Ian Erskine and his wife Kay, taken at their wedding. They are in the centre, flanked by Kay's sister and father. I hope it comes out OK - apologies to Ian if it isn't a very good reproduction. Best wishes to everyone - and Christmas greetings. See you in the New Year. Don Turnbull.





HAVE A  
VERY HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS